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PIETER DE HOOCH

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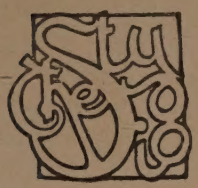

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N Pieter de Hooch is exemplified the destiny of those periods of genius in painting which seem to have been suddenly thrown up, and as suddenly to sink back again, leaving no apparent trace. If only genius were capable of selective breeding and training, how simple it would be! Once the finer style or strain was fixed, in an individual or in a school, how easy to ensure that it bred progressively, accentuating desirable propensities, eliminating feebler, till in time excellence became an instinct which nothing could check. But the way of art is sadly different.

Pieter de Hooch illustrates in his single self the development and decay of the Dutch genre school of the seventeenth century, to which he gave such lustre. To gain a brief survey of that school we should glance first at the earlier style exhibited in D. Hals, Duyster, Van Velsen and Simon Kick. Duyster and Van Velsen may be seen in the National Gallery in typical pictures exhibiting that metallic quality of detail and lighting which, for our purpose, may be regarded as the early stage of this school of genre. They show us the typical costume-pictures of soldiery who have passed from the useful to the "chocolate" stage. They show us that in its early days this school of genre was ignorant of the assimilating or enveloping effects of light and atmosphere, being content to set its popular subjects in the sharply-focussed glitter of convention. To account for the change which came over Dutch painting from about 1630 onwards it is usually considered enough to murmur Rembrandt. But that name will not explain the ultimate achievement of de Hooch and Vermeer and what they stand for—the painting of true plein-air and daylight. The truth is that the movement towards daylight painting was in the air, starting with the landscape and marine painters and gradually invading genre. Thus Duyster eventually shared the new vision of tone and atmosphere, and Van Velsen, whose white-walled and brightly-lit interior in the National Gallery is dated 1631, was evidently a pioneer of plein-air painting. Another remarkable pioneer of cool daylight and luminous atmosphere is Saenredam.

With this tendency, then, and this increasing study of what we now call true values, the golden age of Dutch genre began. It lasted little more than twenty years. Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch are the peak to which the school attained, so far, at least, as we are now concerned. In their hands Dutch genre painting transcended its customary narrow bounds. For they excel Metsu, Maes, Terborch and Steen, in whose pictures the proportion of anecdotal art to a more purely painter-like aim was always high, and whose imagination and perception, sensitive though they were, either failed to see or were but transiently interested in the new world of light and sun-filled air. The raw material of de Hooch's and Vermeer's pictures was much the same as Metsu's, Maes's, or Terborch's, but, transformed by the magic of their plein-air into a greater thing, it became part of the eternal beauty of sunlight and sun-steeped atmosphere.

Had genius been amenable to eugenics, the strain introduced by Fabritius, Vermeer and de Hooch would have been securely fixed and art had steadily progressed. But nothing like that happened. Instead we see the curve of Dutch genre rapidly descending, even before de Hooch died, till in the last quarter of the seventeenth century it touched again the latitude from which it started early in the century. Only the names and the degree of accomplishment are changed: now we have a Willem van Mieris, where before it was

Duyster or Simon Kick. Gone were the truth, simplicity and subtlety which Vermeer and de Hooch had revealed, and in their place had come the devotion of well-nigh incredible skill to a toy-like genre. Where the genius of the golden age of Dutch painting had interpreted the very soul of atmosphere and light, and by means of large design had exalted genre to a monumental level, decadence produced flies and drops of water done *à merveille*.

Pieter de Hooch, the son of a mason, Hendrick Hendrickz de Hoogh (formerly described as a painter or a butcher), was baptised in the Reformed Church at Rotterdam, on December 20th, 1629. His mother was Annetje Pieters, by profession a mid-wife. Our ignorance of de Hooch's early years and studentship is well nigh complete. Houbraken asserts that with Jacob Ochterveldt he was one of Nicholas Berchem's pupils in Amsterdam. Berchem is well known by his innumerable landscapes, garnished with cattle and peasants, in the usual semi-Italianate conventional style. We see his influence clearly in other pupils, K. du Jardin, for instance, and traces of it appear in the earliest recognised work of de Hooch. This picture of a lady and gentleman out riding, with a gipsy reading the lady's hand, suggests something of Wouwerman as well. On the whole, however, the significant foundation of de Hooch's genre was the art of painters like Duyster, Le Duck and Kick; the latter, who lived till 1652, may have personally affected him. No doubt, too, the general influence of Rembrandt in Amsterdam and perhaps contact with young Nicolas Maes, contributed to compose his early style. But it should be noted that the influence of the Rembrandt of about 1650, when de Hooch was presumably in Amsterdam, does not appear in his work. Internal evidence shows that he did not receive a thorough draughtsman's training, for though he gradually learned to draw adequately, so that in his best period we see nothing amiss in the construction and articulation of his figures, yet it is obvious that at no time was he an instinctively accomplished draughtsman in the sense that applies to Steen, Terborch and Metsu. Nor can we say that his use of pigment and brushes is stylishly accomplished. Indeed the execution of his work hardly attracts notice, so free is it from virtuosity and convention. Without injustice we may regard him as the least professionally accomplished member in that remarkable constellation of the mid-seventeenth century Dutch masters.

The facts and dates of de Hooch's early years are not quite clear. This summary of present information is made from the Thieme-Becker Kunstlerlexikon. In May, 1653, he was employed by one Justus la Grange, a wealthy adventurer and amateur, as "valet and painter"; he was with him in The Hague in July, 1653. The inference is that la Grange had done de Hooch a good turn in thus ensuring him bread and butter during his early struggles: ten pictures by our young artist were sold in la Grange's estate in 1655. Presumably de Hooch lived with la Grange in The Hague and Leiden, certainly till his marriage on May 3rd, 1654, to Jannetje van der Burgh at Delft, her own town. Her brother, perhaps, was H. van der Burgh, one of de Hooch's followers. Pieter's name occurs in the Delft Guild accounts as a "stranger" or "foreign" member, in 1653, on September 20th, 1655, and in 1657. I am not sure when he was admitted as a member. It does not seem certain that he settled down in Delft at once, as he is known to have visited Leiden and The Hague repeatedly between 1653 and 1657, still, conceivably with la Grange. Jannetje bore him at least two children, a son in 1655 and a daughter Anna (?) in 1656. The "Oppenheim" picture of 1658, with two children aged, say, three and under a year, suggests that another came in 1657: possibly the one born in 1656 is in the Louvre *Servant and Child*. If the companion pictures, of a mother with an unweaned baby, in the Rijksmuseum and at Vienna, depict Jannetje it would be reasonable to suppose that a fourth child was born in the early 'sixties. But the identity of de Hooch's sitters has yet to be worked out. Jannetje

probably died at Delft, perhaps in childbirth, in 1667, thus causing de Hooch's documented migration that year to Amsterdam, where he is said to have lived in the Konijnenstraat. Nothing else in the way of documents is known of him subsequently save some ten dates upon his pictures. The last to be generally credited is 1683, and it is inferred, without proof, that our artist died soon after, aged about fifty-four.

The National Gallery possesses one of de Hooch's early pictures, the *Stable Interior* (probably *c.* 1656), and one of his latest dated works, " *La Collation* " (1677). In this early thin-lit effort we see him emerging from the tradition of Duyster, Le Duck and Kick, already having gained a certain fusion. Of the same kind but more boldly lit is the Borghese Gallery *Soldiers in a Tavern*, formerly attributed to J. Le Duck. Other works typical of this phase are the *Maid and a Soldier in a Cellar* in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, *Soldiers and a Woman* in the W. J. Abrahams sale in 1920 : a *Guard-room Scene* in the Tritsch Collection, Vienna : the Hermitage *Matinée d'un Jeune Homme* ; a *Soldier and Maid* in the Blumingen Collection in Rotterdam, and the Dublin *Tric-Trac Players*. In these de Hooch still retains much of the " spot light " effect, wherein the focussed light is isolated in a more or less dark belt of shadow. Perhaps we should assume that it was with pictures of this Amsterdam type that de Hooch had attracted his patron la Grange and appealed to the Delft Guild about 1653-1655. But at some time between, shall we say, 1656 and 1658 something happened to " speed up " his evolution. The most reasonable theory may be that in Delft he was quickened by a remarkable " modern " young man, Carel Fabritius (b. 1624), who, coming from Rembrandt's studio in Amsterdam in 1647, was now revolutionising the painter's vision in Delft. It seems likely that he had managed, either by personal contact or by sowing enough seed, to give the all-important direction to Vermeer and de Hooch before he was blown up and killed in 1654. We must remember that in all probability the remnant of his œuvre known to us but dimly represents his full effect. He was admitted to the Guild in 1652, aged about thirty : Vermeer, a native of Delft, was Fabritius's junior by about ten years and joined the Guild in 1653. There can, I think, be no question that at this stage de Hooch was the least advanced of the trio, and that on the whole it was Vermeer who subsequently influenced de Hooch, rather than the other way about.[1] As for Fabritius we must remember that he was killed in October, 1654, so that de Hooch, who was not much in Delft before the early summer of that year, cannot have benefited by long personal contact with him. But that he carefully studied his work is proved by his picture in the Corsini Palace in Rome. This picture, called *La Garde*, is a plagiarism of Fabritius' *Sentinel* in the Schwerin Gallery, and shows in one half our artist's allegiance to the older convention of Kick and Co., in the other his new interests. Another interesting work, *A Soldier Cleaning his Gun*, which recently appeared in London attributed to Vermeer, really may illustrate a further stage in de Hooch's develop-

[1] Vermeer, though Pieter's junior, was certainly the more able young man. His *Courtesan* was painted in 1656, and there is good reason for placing *La Laitière* not long after. A comparison of these works with the first group of de Hooch's 1658 series settles the question of relative achievement. As it would be unnatural to argue that an artist of Vermeer's calibre would have borrowed seriously from a less endowed companion, we may interpret a similarity of motif in the two men's pictures as evidence of Pieter's discipleship. Thus it is reasonable to suppose that when de Hooch painted *The Slippers* in 1658 and the Berlin *Vista in a Dutch House* he had such a picture as Vermeer's *Girl Asleep* in his mind. When he painted the Berlin *Gold Weigher*, in her lovely blue overall, by her lion's-head chair, he was thinking of such Vermeers as the Rijksmuseum *Reader*, or that even more lovely *Reader* at Dresden. As a later instance of his borrowing we have the *Concert* at Philadelphia, in which the woman strumming on a lute recalls the woman in Vermeer's *New Testament* at The Hague. On the other hand de Hooch seems to owe nothing to Vermeer for his motifs of children and of outdoor glimpses, nor for his silhouettes. As regards his later relapse into anecdotal genre, we may speculate on his relation to such a man as Caspar Netscher or F. van Mieris, and his need for pot-boilers.

ment. If this be another of his experimental works it suggests a Fabritius-period beginning combined with a theme taken later from some such Vermeer as the Windsor *Music Lesson.* Fabritius's achievement in revealing a new range of light and values can be adequately gauged by the *Man in a Fur Cap* in the National Gallery. His famous *Gold Finch* is another scrap of evidence. We can readily understand how attractive to adventurous spirits this new range was. In place of the old " spot light " effect, glowing in the midst of cavernous shadows, and the old metallic quality of figures unblended with the atmosphere, now they began to see light dropping sheer from the sky and filling the very corners of the rooms, and to realise that air itself is a luminous veil. In consequence they became aware of a new gamut of values, running subtly from luminous cool half-tones up to cool high light.[1]

De Groot heads his chronological list of de Hooch's works with the picture called the *Delft Explosion.* This picture is neither dated, I believe, nor incontestably signed, but it seems natural to place it in 1654, the year of the disaster. Apparently it is colourless and has little bearing on our painter's other work. The second picture in de Groot's list, *The Lady with a Maid kneeling by the Fire,* said to be dated 1656, is reproduced in Sedelmeyer's " 300 Paintings," 1908 (73). Sedelmeyer's catalogue, however, cannot be implicitly trusted in its dates, nor is the lithographic reproduction clear enough to warrant acceptance or rejection of the alleged date. But the lady's costume, as suggested by the illustration, the background, general tone and lighting, seem much later than 1656. It seems then that the first firm ground we have to rely on is 1658, to which year six of the two dozen or so generally known dated pictures by de Hooch belong. Then he was twenty-nine and almost at the top of his form. Is it not curious that his greatest period should have come so suddenly, have been so short, and that it should have declined when he was yet, as artists go, a young man? Before he was thirty he had painted some of his masterpieces, and when he was forty he was settling into the style which was soon to sink so low that we find it hard to reconcile the de Hooch of 1660, with him of 1675. We cannot contest de Groot's summing up that " the pictures painted during the last ten [sixteen] years of his life are nothing more than feeble reflexions of the splendid pieces of his Delft period."

This Delft period of masterpieces begins with the 1658 series. It may not be fanciful to arrange the pictures centering on them in the following approximate order. The Rijksmuseum " *Larder* " (not dated) and the *Mother with two Children* (dated 1658) from the Oppenheim Collection at Cologne; the Louvre *Servant and Child;* the Rijksmuseum *Mother combing a Child's Hair;* Lord Strafford's *Courtyard and Arbour* (dated 1658); the Widener Collection *Courtyard with a Rose Tree and Arbour;* the National Gallery *Courtyard*

[1] The problem of the origin of the full plein-air movement is difficult. In my view the most probable explanation is that Fabritius was the fount from which Vermeer and de Hooch drew their decisive inspiration. Some think, however, that Metsu was a more vital inspiration. This theory is based on the assumption that his *Sick Child,* now in the Huldschinsky Collection in Berlin, was painted in 1656. The picture is signed, but not, I believe, actually dated. Until I am convinced that the evidence for 1656 is irrefutable I shall be a sceptic. For the costume of the mother certainly suggests the 'sixties; Metsu's really dated *Money Weigher* of 1654 is wholly of the Dou-Rembrandt tradition of lighting; his *Visit to the Nursery* and his *Lovers at Breakfast* both dated 1661, and his two *Poultry Stall* pictures dated 1662 are all outside the zone of true Vermeer-de Hooch plein-air painting. His *Lady at a Piano* in the Cook Collection, the *Sick Child* and the two Beit Collection pictures are within the zone, and to my mind fall somewhere near 1665, having been inspired by Vermeer's work. Apart from dates it seems to me illogical to argue that a man in whose œuvre true plein-air is a passing interest should have supplied the motive power to a greater artist of whose whole work this theme is the mainspring. Lastly, I consider that the way in which details, such as dado-tiles and picture frames, are treated in the four true daylight Metsus indicates that they were derived from Vermeer. Apropos of this problem, Emmanuel de Witte, Brekelenkam and L. Bourssse have to be accounted for.

in S. Jerome's Lane (dated 1658); and *The Card-Players* (dated 1658) at Buckingham Palace. Within a short time on either side of the two last must come the National Gallery *Interior* and the *Lady reading* in the Arenberg Collection at Brussels, and I assume that the *Family Group* in the Akademie at Vienna, which so far as I know is unique in de Hooch's work, must fall within the same few months. There are two more works dated 1658, Lord Bute's *Paying the Hostess* and *The Slippers*, which is reproduced in Sedelmeyer's Catalogue of 1898.

The important consideration as regards this group is the length of the stride separating the first few pictures from the *Card-Players* and the *S. Jerome's Lane*. The first pictures are not a great distance from de Hooch's early period as shown in the National Gallery *Stable Interior*. His genre has been transferred from low life to domestic respectability, and his light has extended across his canvas. Instead of the cavernous backgrounds natural to barns and taverns, he now has light plaster walls, reflective tiles, and vistas leading to distant doors or windows. But in the Oppenheim dated picture and its companion, *The Larder*, which were painted, may we say, in the Spring of 1658, there is a singleness of dimension in the light, a lack of body, which is not essentially different from the quality in the earlier period. But in Lord Strafford's *Court and Arbour*, and increasingly in *S. Jerome's Lane* and the *Card-Players*, which, shall we say, were done in full autumn of that year, the light is dense and circumambient. It is not confined mainly to the walls and the figures set against them, but hangs in the air between us and the figures, and surrounds them so that they are seen enveloped in light and air, as fishes in a glass tank are seen dimmed in water.

In de Hooch's great period, which had almost reached its full power by the time he painted *The Card-Players* and the *Courtyard in Jerome's Lane*, light is the principal agent in his pictures. The people, the rooms, the courts and gardens are primarily the material with which light shall conjure to create beauty. This does not mean that the figures in these pictures are inadequate; without exception they are sincerely rendered, and unself-consciously busy in their occupations. But there is no effort at anecdotal characterisation, and no pretentiousness; at this period de Hooch's allegiance to the study of light was undivided; it was not till some years later that other interests crept in and destroyed his single-mindedness.

He started with a relatively simple theme, the light falling from behind the spectator directly on the figures and the walls of the room, with a second source of light facing us in the background. This gives a large central mass of light, framed in half shadow. The whole effect is blond, despite the strength of individual bits of colour. But in the *S. Jerome's Lane* and *The Card-Players* de Hooch has pushed on to a more complicated problem. No longer content with the simple theme of light falling evenly on his subject, he now combines with this the enchanting problem of figures intercepting the light. This was, of course, no new problem, but de Hooch now attacked it with his novel perception of luminous air coming between the artist and his object, even though such object were silhouetted against a blaze of light. His game, as one may say, was to make a dark silhouette, dressed in black, if you please, blend with the light as much as possible. So in *The Card-Players* and *S. Jerome's Lane* he paints a man in a black coat seated full against the window, and a woman in black and red standing in a tunnel, cut out against the sunny street. We have suggested that on the whole de Hooch followed Vermeer, but in this respect he was independent, owing nothing to the other, who, so far as I remember, did not tackle this particular problem. As we should expect from a palette chiefly concerned with brilliant daylight, de Hooch's at this period is in effect blond and golden. In the *Card-Players*, for example, we find notes of lemon-yellow, full black and red, orange-vermilion, brown-rose and sapphire blue: but so exquisitely true is the perception of the unity imposed by light and light-drenched air that the result is monochrome rather than vivid colour. It is not in his positive clarion notes of colour that de Hooch's greatest qualities

as colourist are shown : it is in his pale puce-browns, his steely greys, his range of ivory, rose, biscuit and faint plum colours that his most personal gifts are manifest.

We have glanced at the pictures which centre round 1658, the year concerning which we have most data. It is not appropriate in this brief study to attempt the fine shades of chronological analysis required to place de Hooch's work from about 1658 to 1672, which is, perhaps, the farthest limit of his good work. A landmark in his life is 1667 when he moves to Amsterdam, a change of ground which, in considerably affecting his tendencies, helps us to date his works. For our purpose it must suffice to group certain examples (many of them reproduced in M. de Ridder's book of de Hooch) in the following tentative order, ranging over these fourteen years.

National Gallery	*Interior*	*circa* 1658-1659
Arenberg Collection, Brussels	*A Woman reading*	*circa* 1659
Carlsruhe and Widener Collection	*A Bedroom*	*circa* 1660
Sedelmeyer Catalogue, 1913	*A Garden Court*	dated 1661
Six Collection	*The Good Housewife*	dated 1663
Rijksmuseum	*Joie Maternelle*	*circa* 1663 (?)
Vienna Museum	*Mother nursing her Baby*	*circa* 1663 (?)
Lord Crawford	*Courtyard of a Delft Inn*	*circa* 1663
Late A. de Rothschild Collection	*Courtyard of a Delft Inn*	*circa* 1663
Wallace Collection	*Boy bringing a Basket*	*circa* 1664
The Louvre	*Les Amoureux*	*circa* 1664
Rijksmuseum	*The Country House*	*circa* 1664-5
Buckingham Palace	*A Spinner*	*circa* 1664-5
Wallace Collection	*Woman peeling Apples*	*circa* 1664-5
The Hermitage	*Lady and her Cook*	*circa* 1664-5
Berlin	*Mother by a Cradle*	*circa* 1665
National Gallery	*Courtyard: cleaning the Fish*	dated 1665
Barnard Sale, 1922	*Man offering a Drink to a Lady*	dated 1665
Copenhagen	*The Minuet*	*circa* 1666
Hampton Court	*The Trio*	*circa* 1667
Borden Collection, New York	*The Concert*	*circa* 1667
De Ridder Collection : Sale, 1924	*A Dutch Home*	dated 1668
Rijksmuseum	*Receiving the Letter*	dated 1670
Yerkes Collection, New York	*Music Party*	dated 1670
Errera Collection, Brussels	*The Duet*	dated 1670
Lille Museum	*A Woman seated by a Window*	dated 1670 (?)
Budapest	*Interior*	*circa* 1670
Lord Northbrook	*The favourite Parrot*	dated 1672
Speck von Sternburg Collection, Lutzschena	*Learning to Walk*	*circa* 1672
Duke of Buccleuch	*Lady and Child, and a Parrot*	*circa* 1672
Duke of Wellington	*The Intruder: Lady at her Toilet*	*circa* 1672
Stockholm	*A Man looking from a Window*	*circa* 1672

De Hooch's tendency in this period is towards stronger tone and more emphatic colour, and away from the vibrant diffusion of light. His backgrounds become darker, his figures less luminously enveloped, and gradually the anecdotal spirit creeps in, ousting his earlier and more painter-like habit of regarding his figures as subordinate to the predominant interest of light and atmosphere. In the same way his colour increasingly tends to become independent of the fusion and unity imposed by plein-air. That, broadly speaking, is the tendency spread over these years. But it is not before, shall we say, 1665, that its cumulative effect has become marked. The National Gallery *Interior* has all de Hooch's interest in silvery pervasive daylight, and though the separate notes of colour are strong yet the whole effect is simply keyed. *Joie Maternelle* in the Rijksmuseum is as full of light as any picture in his œuvre, though the

Vienna *Mother nursing her Baby* (apparently a companion picture) is less luminous. In the Buckingham Palace *Spinner* de Hooch reaches, I think, his strongest pitch of baking sunshine and his most emphatic design. No modern renderings of sunlight are more suggestive of blinding glare and still heat. Compared with the *S. Jerome's Lane* of 1658, its colour is stronger and hotter. Though there is no appreciable difference between the technique of *S. Jerome's Lane* and the seven years later *Courtyard: cleaning the Fish*, the latter is less airy and more locally coloured. Some of the plein-air has evaporated. The light painted in *The Spinner* is summer's fiercest, that in *Cleaning the Fish* the thin cool light of spring. In Lord Crawford's *Courtyard of an Inn* the light has a curious steely quality which strikingly recalls Vermeer's *Street in Delft*. In colour this *Courtyard* lies about midway between *S. Jerome's Lane* and *The Spinner;* nearer to this last comes the Rijksmuseum *Country House* with its more positive and less light-enveloped colour.

With the Wallace Collection *Boy with a Basket* and *A Woman peeling Apples* we reach typical examples of de Hooch's deepened palette and richer tone. There can be no finer examples of the climax of his great period. In the *Boy with a Basket*, the master's self-set problem of the silhouette is more complicated than it had been in the *Card-Players* and *S. Jerome's Lane*. He has chosen for his silhouettes, intercepting the outside glare, figures doubly lit: directly by the sun and indirectly by reflected glow. The boy is dressed in blond putty colour with apricot bows on his kilt. The woman leaning out from the cool gloom of the interior cuts the light with her brightly lit head and hand, and, filling a double rôle, tells as a glowing light within the darkened room. As a *tour de force* of observation and painting the gleam on the open door, passing from the cool reflection of the blue sky to the warmth of interior light, repays close study. And as a scheme of colour this symphony of gold, pale rose-vermilion, silver and white, orange and sapphire, is a marvel of sensitive emotion and arrangement. If we may conjecture that the boy, aged about nine, is the son born in 1655, we can more confidently date the picture 1664. He recurs in the Drummond Collection de Hooch, sold in 1919.

Les Amoureux in the Louvre and the Copenhagen *Minuet* are early examples of de Hooch's society pictures. In some respects *Les Amoureux* is puzzling, for the charming lady in the foreground is more like one of Ochterveldt's women than de Hooch's. The treatment of fashionable society in these pictures suggests the latter's Amsterdam rather than his Delft period. On the other hand the costumes, which are pre 1670, might belong to the earlier 'sixties, for the fashions of the smart set were considerably ahead of those worn by the middle bourgeois class, with which in his early Delft time de Hooch was occupied. Metsu's people, be it noted, are nearly always of the more fashionable world. Moreover in these pictures there remains much of the earlier gusto for diffused light, so that if, as is quite possible, they belong to round about 1663-66, we must revise the general view that it was not till he left Delft in 1667 that de Hooch embarked on fashionable genre. Two other pictures in this category are the Borden Collection *Concert* and the *Music Party: a Trio* at Hampton Court, which should be placed among his first Amsterdam or last Delft productions.

By 1665, as the Barnard Collection *Offering a Drink* shows, de Hooch was well on the way to his final phase, and the Ridder Collection *Dutch Home* seems to indicate that by 1668 his position was irretrievable. But subsequent pictures prove that he retained something of his old quality as late as 1672. The anecdotal interest, absent from the *Boy bringing a Basket*, is clumsily established in the Barnard picture, for de Hooch had neither the grace nor wit required for fashionable anecdotal genre. It should be noted that about now he turned to Metsu's women for inspiration, probably feeling that his own earlier type was not smart enough

for gallant subjects. This Metsu influence is seen in the Barnard picture and in the Altmann Bequest de Hooch, in the Metropolitan Museum. The tendency we noted in the previous decade towards darker tone and more positive colours unfused by air and light, steadily increases. Instead of his former concentration on luminosity and firm geometrical design now his attention is distracted by elaboration of architecture, by anecdotal considerations and by concessions to popular demand. A certain simplicity of content yet remains in such a picture as the Rijksmuseum *Receiving a Letter* of 1670, though it has little of his vibrant light, and none of the vigorous design of five years earlier. But for the charming peep of out-of-doors we have here the ordinary lighting of a Metsu or Maes picture. A pleasant feature in many late works is a glimpse of evening sunlight or egg-green evening sky. In Lord Northbrook's *Favourite Parrot* de Hooch brilliantly recovers much of his earlier interest in flooding light and well-knit pattern. At the same time in the crimson dress, for example, the beetle-green skirt shot with dull gold-green, the notes of Chinese vermilion and pale, sharp blue, we have the unblended local colour of his later palette. This must be one of the last flashes of his old genius.

His unrelieved declension may be said to have lasted from *c.* 1675 onwards till his death. There are so many pictures assigned to this period that when we fancied that he died about 1677 it seemed impossible to account for them all. Now that we know that he had at least six more years in which to deteriorate the difficulty shrinks. A short list of typical last works, but roughly arranged, may be of some use here :

Weinhagen Sale : Cologne, 1890	*Gentleman at a Table*	dated 1674
Berlin	*The Trumpeter*	
Philadelphia Museum	*Social Party*	dated 1675
Beurnonville Sale, 1881	*The Notary*	dated 1676
National Gallery	*La Collation*	dated 1677
Lord Barnard Sale, 1922	*Interior, five people and a page*	
Sedelmeyer Catalogue, 1913, ex-Weber Collection	*Party*	
Cook Collection, Richmond	*Music Party*	
Yerkes Collection, New York	*Music Party*	
Lilienfeld Collection	*Man and Woman on a Balcony*	
Youssoupoff Collection	*Dressing a Child*	
The Hermitage	*A Concert*	
Johnson Collection, Philadelphia	*Garden with Poplars*	
Mandel Collection, Wiesbaden	*A Music Party*	
Messrs. Goudstikker, Amsterdam	*Girl and Gentleman at a Table*	dated 1683

But we must still be chary of crediting de Hooch with everything alleged against him, though such pictures as the *Garden scene with Poplars* in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, argue that he was *capable de tout*. Also we must remember that his followers include many diverse talents. Such important works as the National Gallery *Refusing the Glass* and the Windsor *Garden Scene*, both attributed by high authorities to Pieter himself, may eventually be traced with certainty each to its real author. Vermeer, whose influence had been in eclipse for years, died in 1675. It may be no more than coincidence that from about then de Hooch's powers more rapidly declined. Surveying his last works and oppressed by the apparent futility of things, we feel tempted to despair. It seems as though, for all the good that they had done, the radiance, the invention, the daring of his great period might never have been, so wholly a negation of them is the conclusion of the matter. It seems as though that splendid era of discovery, which anticipated Chardin and the landscape of Constable, had been in vain. It is true indeed that the practical influence of Vermeer and de Hooch on the Dutch School ceased with them : no disciples carried on their torch. And when in the mid-nineteenth century " Truth to Nature " was the watchword, none seemed aware that Vermeer and de Hooch (or

Constable, for that matter), had set a standard of truth to the greatest qualities of Nature's lighting and plein-air, which was far in advance, for instance, of our Pre-Raphaelites' objective. I do not know what influence these two great apostles of *enveloppement* had on Manet and the French Impressionists. But it is not till we reach this latter movement that the problems attacked by these two Dutch masters were finally engaged, though not so adequately dealt with.

Grateful acknowledgment is made in the first place to His Majesty the King for graciously according permission to reproduce the paintings by de Hooch, in Royal Collections at Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle. Also to His Grace the Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, the Earl of Strafford and the Earl of Northbrook, who have kindly allowed pictures from their collections to be reproduced. The Louvre, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection have in addition given kind assistance in granting facilities for the reproduction of examples of the artist's work.

PLATE III.

"COURTYARD IN S. JEROME'S LANE (1658)

(In the National Gallery)

" COURTYARD IN
(In the Vatican

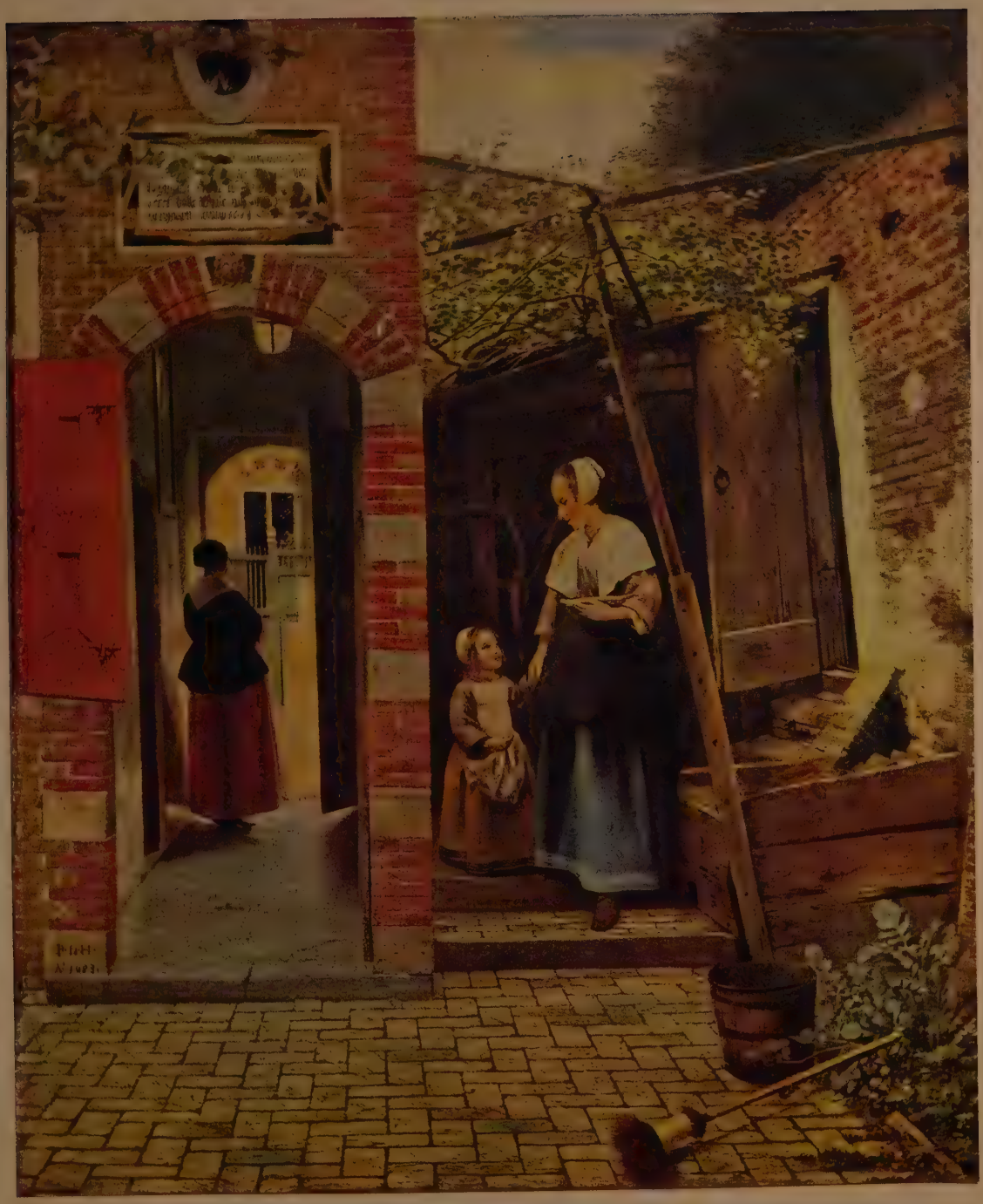

PLATE IV.

"INTERIOR: A LADY WITH TWO CAVALIERS"

(In the National Gallery)

c1658

PLATE V.

"COURTYARD OF A DELFT INN"

(*In the Collection of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres*)

c 1663

PLATE VI.
" THE CARD-PLAYERS "
(In the Louvre)

PLATE VIII.

"MUSIC PARTY: THE TRIO"

(In the Hampton Court Gallery; Copyright of H.M. the King)

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PLATE IX

"A LADY RECEIVING A LETTER" (1670)

(In the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

PLATE X

"GARDEN SCENE" (Attributed to Pieter de Hooch)

(In the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle; Copyright of H.M. the King)

PLATE XI.

"THE FAVOURITE PARROT" (1672)

(*In the Collection of the Earl of Northbrook*)

PLATE XII.

"THE INTRUSION"

(In the Collection of the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House)

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